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Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors

Minutes of the Houston 2024 Semi-Annual Board of Directors Meeting/Hotel ZaZa

August 1, 2024, 8:00 am Central

President Michael Seeliger called the meeting to order at approximately 8:00 am.

Present: Michael Seeliger, President
Alice Seeliger, Secretary
Ferdinand Meyer V, Director-at-Large
Kathie Craig, Treasurer
Elizabeth Meyer, Business Manager/Membership Director
Eric McGuire, Western Region Director
Tom Lines, Southern Region Director
Richard Siri, Director-at-Large
Craig Cassetta, Conventions Director
Brian Bingham, Historian Director
Henry Hecker, Midwest Region Director
Charlie Martin, Northeast Region Director

Absent: John O'Neill, Director-at-Large
Steve Jackson, Second Vice President

Guests: Paul Hars, Bella Alucema, FOHBC Youth Ambassador; H24 Team Members: Brad Dalton, Edie Alucema and Addy Meyer. Edie and Addy left after their introduction to set up the H24 registration station.

1. Michael welcomed those board members present.
2. No other non-FOHBC members were in attendance.
3. Member visitor introduced himself: Paul Hars from Connecticut
4. Ferd gave a H24 update including the order of the days and consortium members.
5. **Financial Statement**

Michael and Kathie Craig presented a recap of the FOHBC account standings, including income and expenses, at the end of our fiscal year of June 30, 2024. Michael reported that Houston 24 had and will have large expenditures. Our major backer, Joel Bartsch, will be providing funds to cover many of the expenses of the Expo. He has also given the two books prepared for this exhibit with a print quantity of 1500 for each book. The book jacket prices are \$95, with a discount for FOHBC members to \$85. We will aggressively market and sell these books. Ferd passed around the wrapped books to keep the contents a surprise until the ribbon cutting at the Museum to open the Exhibitions.

The 250 Drake's commemorative bottle sale process was explained. These will be a major source of revenue for Houston 24 and the FOHBC. Kathie Craig explained that the mold for the bottle was donated by Mike and Kathie Craig, and they will retain it. Mike's time to work with Treg Silkwood to blow the bottles was also donated to FOHBC. Michael Seeliger paid \$100 to Treg for each bottle and H24 will reimburse him for that expense. Since they are being sold for \$250, there is a potential profit of approximately \$35,000 after some added expenses such as charge card or PayPal fees, boxes and tissue, labels, outside boxes and padding for packing, and mailing costs incurred for sales (of any remaining bottles) after H24.

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Directors are reminded that they receive a summary statement at the end of each month from Michael after obtaining data from Elizabeth Meyer, Kathie Craig, and Alan DeMaison.

Kathie has begun the process of preparing the tax return as of our fiscal year end June 30, 2024. She will use the same preparer as was used last year. She will also prepare any required 1099s and coordinate with Alan DeMaison regarding the VM 1099s.

6. Estimated Profit and Loss Statement for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024

Michael pointed out several details:

Income \$93,000+

- Membership \$64,000
- Clubs \$6,000
- Magazine Ads \$21,000

Before the merger of the two magazines the cost of the Federation's Bottles and Extras magazine for each member was about \$30 annually, now it is about \$24 annually.

Magazines are being used as marketing tools at shows and have brought in new members.

Directors need to continue representing FOHBC at shows using displays, magazines, and other promotional materials. Michael attended 13 shows this year and has brought in lots of new members. Periodically, extra magazines are printed to use for promotion. Michael encouraged Directors to get prospects to sign up as members during the shows either on line or by filling out a membership form.

- Insurance rebate \$2,000

Expenses \$128,500

- Advertising \$300 (incomplete reporting – will increase)
- Modern Litho \$50,000 for printing of magazine
- Mailing of Magazine \$11,000
- Editor's Wages \$7,200
- Business Manager's Wages \$7,700
- Administrative Labor \$15,000 (partial year) (FOHBC and Houston 24 – will be divided out)
- Research tools, ISSUU page reading service, 3 web site fees, apps, etc. mail chimp \$7,300
- Web services (Miguel's under-the-hood work) \$17,500
- Postage \$2,000
- Bonding of Board Members \$800
- PayPal and Charge Card fees (Switching to ACH payment that do not incur fees) \$750
- Office Supplies \$8,000
- Insurance \$1,000

Net (\$35,000) Many items paid out of period and reimbursement for personal payments made

7. Tax Status

Alice reported that she has worked since the beginning of the year to bring the Federation back into compliance with the State of Tennessee, the Federation's state of incorporation in 1990. Annual reports and reinstatement fees were required. Then the Federation was registered in Texas as a "Foreign Entity" and received a Sales & Use Tax Permit. She applied for a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization tax exemption status for collecting and paying sales tax for a 48 period (contiguous, or two days per year) which would cover all events of H24, including the auction, from Friday at 2 pm until Sunday at 2 pm. This exemption was finally granted two days ago.

A sales and use tax exemption was granted for items purchased for the operation of FOHBC. We will be seeking some clarification on what is included, especially if it includes the magazine.

There will be on-going sales tax reporting requirements which Alice will document. Eventually, Kathie Craig will take over the periodic reporting requirements. The first sales and use tax report will be due in October of 2024. Future sales from the website, etc. will need to include sales tax and we will need to report and pay those taxes to Texas tax authorities. Since the base of operation for FOHBC is Texas, this will be the governing tax authority.

Texas will require periodic reporting requirements to maintain FOHBC state registration (not more than every four years). Tennessee requires annual reports. Alice will handle these until she turns them over to Kathie.

8. Audit Summary

John O'Neill performed an audit of all Federation accounts as of December 31, 2023 to verify that balances were accurate and reported to the board that everything was in order.

9. Budget Summary FY 2024-2026

Michael is estimating a conservative number of 1,800 members at \$40 each, plus \$2,000 in merchandise sales, \$21,000 in magazine ads and \$30,000 net income from H24. Plus sales of the two exhibition books. Expenses continue to increase with printing costs, administrative expense, advertising, and various service fees so it is important to continue to monitor income and expenditures.

Michael did not present a formal budget for fiscal year 2024-2026.

Michael is removing expired memberships from the website. This often causes people to renew when they find they cannot get into the Member Portal and Auction Price Report.

Brian suggested that we look at Antique-bottles.net which gets 30,000 visits a week and ask them to join FOHBC. The administrator/owner is looking at retiring and it may present a possibility for FOHBC to take this over. Ferd questioned interruption by distracting ads. AABR Forum out of Australia also has a good following. We need to boost social media presence. Maria Nauman is helping with posts for Houston 24. Ian Moody is no longer providing social media services. Our current website has low algorithms which Ferd says will be corrected with the new website. Ferd prefers no advertising, however, ads can pay for the operation of the website. There needs to be a balance and appropriate ads only.

We discussed the value of hard copy magazines and how long this is a viable method. Ferd suggested it will be obsolete within the next five years as more people use digital medium to get their information. Many "dinosaur" members still prefer the hard copy and probably always will. We will be in a transition phase for the next five years or so as this plays out.

Social media sites like Tom Askjem's, geared to bottle diggers, are gaining popularity and will appeal to the younger generation. Tom was scheduled to be a speaker at H24 but unfortunately had to cancel because he is transitioning from a previous YouTube site to his own site: "TomAskjem" on Facebook and YouTube.

Michael said membership projection is 2,000 by June 30, 2025, the end of the next fiscal year. He hopes to also increase digital membership, especially for foreign collectors.

Since Lifetime members have paid and no longer receive renewal notices, it was suggested that we solicit donations from them. Michael will put together a letter to request their participation in fundraising and tell them about the success of Houston 24 and upcoming projects they could support. Brian suggested we list the Lifetime Members in the January 2025 issue of AB&GC and give them some recognition.

Craig Cassetta suggested we investigate establishing a scholarship fund, perhaps for a college student studying history. Alice mentioned that the board had investigated setting up a Foundation with the help of Steve Jackson and this project should be restarted. Having a foundation makes it easier to solicit donations from companies.

Michael would like to have a Federation table at every show. He attended and represented FOHBC at 13 shows this past year. He brought in many members and generated interest in H24. In the future,

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the FOHBC representative could sell books, t-shirts, etc., as well as promote memberships and renewals. FOHBC currently has 61 member clubs, 161 Lifetime members, 30 digital members (4 lifetime), and about 1,335 regular members for a total of just over 1,500 members. 141 of these memberships expired as of July 31, 2024, and he will be sending renewal reminders soon.

10. Bylaws Report

Michael outlined the changes to the bylaws that will be presented at the General Membership meeting tomorrow morning for a vote of acceptance. Most of the changes involved bringing the bylaws into the digital age, allowing for on-line voting, notices, decisions, etc.

The bylaws changes will allow for a change from a board of directors with 19 positions to a reduced board of 15 positions. He reviewed how the positions were changed and duties reassigned on a transitional organizational chart.

11. New Board Positions & Responsibilities

If the new bylaws are accepted at the general membership meeting, a new chart of organization will be put into place as Michael appoints current directors to new positions. A final organization chart will be published.

Two positions are not filled: Vice President and Membership Director. Brian Bingham volunteered to accept the Membership Director position, so there is only one un-filled board position.

12. Membership Director Report

Michael reported that there are 161 lifetime members, 1335 regular members, 141 whose memberships will expire on July 31, 2024, for a total of approximately 1,500.

Michael is requesting that an automatic membership renewal system be put into place. This will be researched and should be possible with the new website.

13. Editor Report – AB&GC

Ferdinand reported that the September-October issue will be later than usual due to Houston 24. The November-December issue will feature Houston 24.

As noted on the new organization chart, Ferdinand will be changing his involvement into overseeing the magazine production either through volunteer effort or paid help.

Currently, magazine ad revenue pays for approximately one half of the cost of the magazine. Ferdinand anticipates the phasing out of the magazine over the next five years noting that the younger collectors use on-line media more than hard copy. A membership survey may be prepared to guide this transition timeframe.

14. Historian Report

Brian has received some old documents from several people. He wondered if they should be scanned to archive. It was felt this was not necessary.

He still needs the magazines that are on the list of magazines not yet scanned and archived but not in his possession. Richard Siri asked for the list as he has kept all of the magazines. He will provide Brian with the magazines he is missing so that this project can be completed.

15. Website Report

A new website was approved by the board with funding of \$5,000 for Miguel Ruiz and Ferd in 2023 but Houston 24 took over everyone's time. This is still a high priority, and the project should begin as soon as possible.

16. Auction Price Report

Michael asked how the Auction Price Report update will be accomplished indicating it is critical in attracting new members and getting renewals. It is now several years out of date. It contains data for 10 years of auction sales from the four major auction houses.

He would like this to become the number one priority and has had several people offer to work on this project.

Ferd indicated it is easy enough to do, just takes time. He will need to have someone else take this on and he will oversee the project. Michael will work with Ferdinand to get this project going stating that he felt it was even more important than getting a new website. Michael also asked if pictures could be added. Ferd said we could start slowly with one picture and go from there.

17. Business Manager Report

Elizabeth feels there is still enough work to require the additional administrative help she has been getting. The monthly cost is about \$2,000. With a new membership director, some of the roster work Michael has been doing can be turned over to Brian and this should reduce some administrative time.

18. Merchandise Report

Craig Cassetta as Marketing Director will set up a committee which will oversee the selection and sale of merchandise.

19. Marketing

Under the new bylaws, Craig Cassetta will become the Marketing Director overseeing Public Relations, Newsletter, Merchandise, Social Media, and Video Projects. He can set up committees as necessary to carry out these activities.

20. Social Media

Craig has already set up an FOHBC YouTube channel and Instagram account. FOHBC already has a Facebook account, and of course the website. Craig will be working on making all of these interconnected. This will better facilitate our move to a digital format for all publications.

21. Virtual Museum

Alan is doing imaging in the Piano Man Lounge during Houston 24. He has begun working on raising money to continue adding to the VM. He will be staying for another week after the close of Houston 24 to image everything in the two special exhibits.

22. Webinars

Michael continues to put together webinars with guest speakers. He maintains a list of attendees and sends invitations to everyone on the list plus any others who request to join after seeing the program announcement. The next one, fourteenth in the series, will be on Warner Go-withs, Rarities and Oddities on August 13. Attendance has been excellent, and he gets lots of positive feedback.

23. Regional Reports

Midwest: Henry Hecker needs information of regional clubs, members, locations, etc. Ferd reminded everyone that he sent a link to access this information. He will resend the link to each

Regional Director. Henry asked how many clubs are in the US. Ferd estimated about 70 that are members of FOHBC. There are about 80 shows a year. The club rules need to be revised to add new categories such as jars, perfumes, etc. Currently 10 members are required to qualify as a club eligible for show insurance coverage. He noted that the Auction Price Report is not available to clubs, only individual members. Club show insurance coverage requirements need to be reviewed also.

Southern: Tom Lines announced a show in Lincoln next weekend. Ferd requested that Tom get the information about the show to put on the FOHBC website. There was some discussion about Facebook-based clubs—can they be members of FOHBC?

Western: Eric McGuire advised all regional directors to review the list of clubs within their regions and ensure that contact information is correct and up to date. Help clubs bring their information current. Clubs advertise the FOHBC in their publication and media sites, and the FOHBC does the same for them. There is no cost to either for this cross promotion.

Northeast: Charlie Martin said lots of shows are coming up. With the New England states entering fall, the colors are spectacular. He suggested combining attending shows with enjoying the change in colors. Brian asked about the Bottle Museum in Ballston Spa. They have been working as somewhat of an affiliate with FOHBC, advertising and promoting us. If you go to the Saratoga show, Ballston Spa is very close. In fact, the Bottle Museum co-sponsors and runs the Saratoga Show with the Saratoga Bottle Club. We have a very good relationship with them.

24. Conventions Director Report

Reno 2025

Craig reported that the Reno show will be held July 31-August 3, 2025, at the Silver Legacy. Craig showed photos of the location, rooms, convention space, etc. He has received a link for hotel room reservations. Richard Siri has the floor plan he will be working with to determine the number of tables the space will hold. They will make a down payment on 150 tables and will establish a price for the show. Richard signed the contract. A downpayment of \$4,000 is due by August 19. The show treasurer will be DeAnna Jordt who will set up accounts at the same bank used in 2022. They will also use the same PO Box.

Plans include a hospitality suite with beverages and snacks, directional signs on the floor, and the Federation logo on the ceiling. The Silver Legacy is across the street from the National Bowling Stadium. Richard is going to explore having the Silver Legacy make a \$5 souvenir chip to be kept as a souvenir or spent at the Casino.

2026

Craig has no prospects for a convention yet.

2027 (Tennessee)

Tom Lines is working with Stanley Word and Greg Eaton from the Ohio Bottle Club to hold a convention at the Lebanon State Fairgrounds. This is not attached to a hotel but there are several nearby. The space at the fairgrounds would easily hold 300 tables. It is 55,000 square feet. A downpayment to hold the space in the amount of \$2500 needs to be made as soon as possible. Stanley and Greg will need to present complete information as required in the FOHBC Guidelines for Hosting Shows documents. Tom will work with them on this. They have shown great enthusiasm for hosting the event.

25. New Business: FY 2024-5 Projects and Projections

This topic was covered throughout the meeting.

26. Conclusion, Final Remarks

Michael thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions. He is pleased that everyone has agreed to serve on the board for another two-year term.

A motion for adjournment was made by Alice Seeliger, seconded by Kathie Craig. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alice J. Seeliger".

Alice J. Seeliger, Secretary

The foregoing conveys our understanding of items discussed and decisions reached during this meeting. FOHBC will assume these notes correct and a matter of record unless notice to the contrary is received within one week of the issue date of these meeting notes.